

Message Text

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40

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-08 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01 SCSE-00 USIA-15

SWF-02 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20 IGA-02

DRC-01 /134 W

----- 029221

P R 301600Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2523

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL RECIFE

USCINCSO

AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE

UNCLAS BRASILIA 2150

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL BR

SUBJECT: FLOODING

REF: STATE 62322

SUMMARY: WIDESPREAD FLOODS AFFECTING STATES OF PARA, CEARA, MATO GROSSO, SANTA CATARINA, PARANA, SAO PAULO, RIO GRANDE DO SUL. FEW VERIFIABLE STATISTICS AVAILABLE. FOLLOWING IS SYNTHESIS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES. END SUMMARY.

1. TUBARAO, SANTA CATARINA SAID BY PRESS TO BE "WIPED OFF MAP." PRELIMINARY REPORTS BY PORTO ALEGRE REGION OF NATIONAL DISASTER COORDINATING COMMITTEE (GEACAP) AND HEADQUARTERS IN RIO SHOW VERY SEVERE DAMAGE TO CITIES AND CROPS IN COASTAL PLAIN FROM TUBARAO TO OSORIO. PORTO ALEGRE OFFICE REPORT IS 170,000 HOMELESS, 100 KNOWN DEAD WITH ESTIMATES UP TO 500. LARGE PART OF RICE, CANE, CORN, SOYBEANS, BANANA, AND PINEAPPLE CROPS LOST. UNCLASSIFIED

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2. PRESS REPORTS STATE TORRES, RIO GRANDE DO SUL, LOST UP TO 1,000 HECTARES RICE, MANY HOUSES; CASUALTIES UNKNOWN. VENANCIO AIRES AND SANTA CRUZ IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL ALSO SEVERELY DAMAGED ACCORDING TO PRESS.

3. MARABA, PARA, OFFICIALLY (GEACAP) REPORTED UNDER WATER WITH ALMOST ENTIRE POPULATION OF 14,500 HOMELESS.

4. SOBRAL, SECOND CITY IN STATE OF CEARA, AND SURROUNDING SMALLER CITIES IN CEARA REPORTING 50,000 HOMELESS ACCORDING TO PRESS. CASUALTIES AND CROP DAMAGE UNKNOWN.

5. FOLLOWING ARE FURTHER REPORTS FROM PRESS: IN MATO GROSSO GRAZING FIELDS SEVERELY DAMAGED. CATTLE LOSS RUNS INTO THOUSANDS OF HEAD. IN SANTA CATARINA 38 CITIES IN DISASTER ZONE. 100 BRIDGES DOWN, 35 PERCENT OF RICE AND 60 PERCENT CORN AND SOYBEAN CROP DESTROYED BY PRESENTLY UNVERIFIED REPORTS. IN PARA MUCH JUTE (RAMIE), AND ESTIMATES OF 70 PERCENT OF BRAZIL NUTS, 80 PERCENT SUBSISTENCE CROPS LOST, PRINCIPALLY IN AREA OF TOCANTINS RIVER. IN PARANA AND SAO PAULO 10 PERCENT OF CORN AND SOYBEAN CROP LOST. RIO GRANDE DO SUL ESTIMATES OVERALL DAMAGE TO CROPS, CATTLE, INDUSTRY, AND ROADS TO EXCEED ONE BILLION CRUZEIROS. GEACAP WARNS AGAINST RELYING SOLELY ON PRESS REPORTS. WE WILL TRY CORROBORATE ABOVE INFORMATION AS SOON AS WE CAN.

6. GOB ACTING EFFICIENTLY ALL AREAS. FEDERAL CREDIT OPENED TO ASSIST 100,000 VICTIMS GEACAP SEEMS TO HAVE SITUATION WELL IN HAND, BUT CAN SUPPLY VERY LITTLE HARD DATA. EMBASSY/USAID HAVE RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO DATE.

9. AMBASSADOR HAS MADE KNOWN TO FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA THAT EMBASSY STANDS READY TO BE OF ASSISTANCE, SHOULD THE GOB CONSIDER OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE NECESSARY. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT USAID AND GEACAP HAVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BASED ON AGREEMENT BY WHICH GEACAP IS SUPPOSED TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE IN DISASTER, WHEN NEEDED. (DATT AT SAME TIME CONVEYED ABOVE INFORMATION TO ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF.) SILVEIRA WAS GRATEFUL AND SAID THAT HE WOULD ADVISE PROPER AUTHORITIES.

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8. TODAY'S REPORTS INDICATE FLOODS LESSENING IN SOUTH. WILL REPORT FURTHER AS ADDITIONAL FIRM INFORMATION AVAILABLE. CRIMMINS

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